

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

- 1-10. (Cancelled)
11. (Currently Amended) A scheduling system for generating a schedule of start times for a plurality of tasks for a project, at least one task of the plurality of tasks having associated resources utilized to perform the task, the system comprising:
 - a load leveler subsystem configured to receive data representative of the plurality of tasks for the project, and to generate a proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks responsive to fluctuations of resources utilized to perform the plurality of tasks, wherein the plurality of tasks are steps in a workflow to complete the project;
 - a cost estimator subsystem communicatively coupled to the load leveler subsystem to evaluate the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks to estimate a cost associated therewith; and
 - a cost minimizer communicatively coupled to the cost estimator for modifying the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks responsive to the resource fluctuations and its associated cost; wherein the load leveler subsystem is further configured to output data representative of the modified proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks for the project.
12. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the cost estimator is implemented using dynamic programming.
13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the cost estimator is implemented using linear programming.

14. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11 wherein the load leveler further comprises a makespan minimizer configured to determine a minimum length schedule of tasks that uses at most a maximum number of resources to complete the plurality of tasks, at least one of the tasks of the plurality of tasks subject to at least one constraint on the location of the task in the schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks.
15. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14 wherein the makespan minimizer uses a schedule packing algorithm.
16. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 11, wherein the cost minimizer subsystem comprises an incremental improvement engine configured to determine for each of a plurality of tasks, each task having a plurality of possible start times, a start time for the task that results in a lowest estimated cost for the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks.
17. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for generating a schedule of start times for a plurality of tasks for a project, each task of the plurality of tasks having zero or more associated resources, the method comprising:
receiving data representative of the plurality of tasks and resources for a project,
wherein the plurality of tasks are steps in a workflow to complete the project;
generating a proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks for the project responsive to fluctuations of resources utilized to perform the plurality of tasks;
evaluating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks to estimate an associated cost;

modifying the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks responsive to
the resource fluctuations and the cost; and
outputting the modified proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks for
the project.

18. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 17, wherein
evaluating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks to estimate
the associated cost further comprises using a dynamic programming model.
19. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 17, wherein
evaluating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks to estimate
the associated cost further comprises using a linear programming model.
20. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 17, wherein
generating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks includes
associating a limitation with each of the resources and producing the proposed
schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks responsive to each limitation.
21. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 20, wherein
generating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks includes
iteratively reducing the limitation for one of the resources and load-leveling the
resources.
22. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 17, wherein
evaluating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks includes
determining costs associated with the resource fluctuations.
23. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 22, wherein the
costs associated with the resource fluctuations include at least one of the group of

resource acquisitions costs, resource disposition costs, incremental costs for resource over-utilization, and incremental costs for resource under-utilization.

24. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 23, wherein resource acquisition costs include a hiring cost.
25. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 23, wherein resource disposition costs include a firing cost.
26. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 23, wherein incremental costs for resource over-utilization include an overtime cost.
27. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 23, wherein incremental costs for resource under-utilization include an idle resource cost.
28. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 17, wherein generating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks comprises identifying an admissible window in the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks for each task of the plurality of tasks and iteratively placing each task of the plurality of tasks within the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks responsive to the admissible window, a priority of the task, and a cost of at least part of the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks having the task placed therein.
29. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 17, wherein evaluating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks comprises examining one of the plurality of tasks to estimate the cost associated with the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks responsive to moving the

task within a window describing allowable locations of the task in the schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks.

30. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented method of claim 17, wherein the resource fluctuations are determined by using a profile for each of the resources.
31. (Withdrawn) A method for optimizing a location of one of a plurality of tasks in a schedule for a project to minimize a cost of the schedule, the method comprising:
 - receiving data describing the task;
 - determining at least one valid start time in the schedule for the task;
 - estimating the cost of the schedule for each valid start time for the task;
 - selecting the valid start time in response to the estimated cost of the schedule; and
 - associating the selected start time with the task; and
 - outputting the selected start time of the task;

wherein the task uses at least one resource, each resource having a cost, and

 - estimating the cost of the schedule for each valid start time for the task further comprises:
 - determining for each start time a cost of each resource used by the task; and
 - estimating the cost of the schedule for each start time by summing the cost of each resource used by the task and other costs in the schedule.
32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31 wherein a dynamic programming model is utilized to estimate a cost of each resource used by a task.
33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 31 wherein a linear programming model is utilized to estimate a cost of each resource used by a task.

34. (Currently Amended) A scheduling system for generating a schedule of start times for a plurality of tasks for a project, at least one task of the plurality of tasks having associated resources utilized to perform the task, the system comprising:
a cost estimator subsystem configured to receive data representative of a proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks for the project, to evaluate the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks, and to estimate a cost of the project associated with the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks, wherein the plurality of tasks are steps in a workflow to complete the project; and
a cost minimizer communicatively coupled to the cost estimator and configured to modify the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks responsive to the resources utilized to perform the plurality of tasks and the estimated cost of the project and to output data representative of the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks.
35. (Previously Presented) The scheduling system of claim 34, wherein the cost estimator is implemented using dynamic programming.
36. (Previously presented) The scheduling system of claim 34, wherein the cost estimator is implemented using linear programming.
37. (Currently Amended) A method for generating a schedule of start times for a plurality of tasks for constructing a ship, at least one task of the plurality of tasks having associated resources utilized to perform the task, the method comprising:
receiving data representative of the plurality of tasks for constructing the ship,
wherein the plurality of tasks are steps in a workflow to construct the ship;

generating a proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of the tasks responsive to fluctuations of resources utilized to perform the plurality of tasks; evaluating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks to estimate a cost associated therewith; modifying the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks responsive to the resource fluctuations and a cost associated therewith; and outputting data representative of a modified proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks for constructing the ship.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the plurality of tasks for constructing the ship ~~comprises~~ comprise welding, painting, electrical work, or any combination thereof.
39. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 37, further comprising determining a minimum length schedule of tasks that uses at most a maximum number of resources to complete the plurality of tasks.
40. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 39, wherein at least one of the plurality of tasks is subject to at least one constraint on the location of the task in the schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks.
41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, further comprising using a schedule packing algorithm.
42. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 37, further comprising determining for each of a plurality of tasks, each task having a plurality of possible start times, a start time for the task that results in a lowest estimated cost for the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks.

43. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for generating a schedule of start times for a plurality of tasks for constructing a ship, each task of the plurality of tasks having zero or more associated resources, the method comprising:
receiving data representative of the plurality of tasks and resources for building
constructing the ship, wherein the plurality of tasks are steps in a workflow to
construct the ship;
generating a proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks for
constructing the ship responsive to fluctuations of resources utilized to
perform the plurality of tasks;
evaluating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks to estimate an
associated cost;
modifying the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks responsive to
the resource fluctuations and the associated cost; and
outputting the modified proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks for
constructing a ship.

44. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 43, wherein the plurality of tasks for
constructing the ship ~~comprises~~ comprise welding, painting, electrical work, or any
combination thereof.

45. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 43, wherein generating the proposed
schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks includes associating a limitation with
each of the resources and producing the proposed schedule of start times for the
plurality of tasks responsive to each limitation.

46. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 45, wherein generating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks includes iteratively reducing the limitation for one of the resources and load-leveling resources.
47. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 43, wherein evaluating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks includes determining costs associated with the resource fluctuations.
48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47, wherein the costs associated with the resource fluctuations include at least one of the group of resource acquisitions costs, resource dispositions costs, incremental costs for resource over-utilization, and incremental costs for resource under-utilization.
49. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 43, wherein generating the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks comprises identifying an admissible window in the proposed schedule of start times for each task of the plurality of tasks and iteratively placing each task within the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks responsive to the admissible window, a priority of the task, and a cost of at least part of the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks having the task placed therein.
50. (Currently Amended) A method for generating a schedule of start times for a plurality of tasks for constructing a ship, at least one task of the plurality of tasks having associated resources utilized to perform the task, the method comprising: receiving data representative of a proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks for constructing the ship, wherein the plurality of tasks are steps in a workflow to construct the ship;

evaluating the proposed schedule of start times of the plurality of tasks;
estimating a cost of constructing the ship associated with the proposed schedule of
start times for the plurality of tasks;
modifying the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality of tasks responsive to
the resources utilized to perform the plurality of tasks and the estimated cost
of constructing the ship; and
outputting data representative of the proposed schedule of start times for the plurality
of tasks.

51. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50, wherein the plurality of tasks for
constructing the ship ~~comprises~~ comprise welding, painting, electrical work, or any
combination thereof.